Computer Information Centre (CIC) in all 446 blocks in the North-East Slates to promote Information Technology and its application. Another 40 such Centres are proposed to be set up in Sikkim. A pilot project is being implemented in 30 blocks to be completed at an estimated cost of Rs. 15 crore by 15.8.2000. The project will be implemented in the next two years and it is expected that functioning of CICs will facilitate documents storage, information procurement processing and transfer in a faster, efficient and accurate manner.

Tube wells in Orissa

4841. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of tube wells in Orissa are not in working condition;

(b) if so, the steps taken to repair these tube wells;

(c) the steps taken to install more tube wells in 2000-2001 to meet the requirement in that State; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Rural Drinking Water Supply is a State subject. The State Governments implement the programme under the State Sector Minimum Needs Programme (MNP). The Central Government only supplements the efforts of the States by providing funds under Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). The powers have been delegated to the States to plan, sanction and implement their individual water supply schemes. As per the preliminary asessment made by Rural Development Department of the State Government of Orissa, there are 9274 defunct tubewells, as on 1.4.2000. The State Government is taking action to replace them in a phased manner from out of State plan allocation.

(c) and (d) The State Government has informed that as per the projection in the State Budget 2000-2001, all left over NC & PC habitations would be covered by installing 2115 Tubewells and 258 Sanitary Wells. Further, 2500 Tubewells at relaxed norm in KBK districts and 500 Tubewells in Primary Schools can be installed. The State Government has also informed that due to meagre resources available under State Plan all the defunct Tubewells can not be replaced during 2000-2001. The State has proposed to install 280 such

Tubewells out of State Plan and 448 additional Tubewells to be installed out of assistance under Calamity Relief Fund.

Bio-Mass and Gobar Gas Plants

4842. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that Bio-Mass and Gobar Gas Plants are powerful instruments towards Rural Development Programme;

(b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government in this direction; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a)Yes, Sir.

(b) Considering the utility of biomass resources and biogas plants for rural development, the Government have launched two national level programmes namely, (i) National Biomass Gasifier Programme and (ii) National Project for Biogas Development in the country.

(c) Does not arise.

Population living below poverty line

4843. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as pe'r the latest report on Rural Development, the percentage of population living below the poverty line was 37.27 per cent in 1993-94;"

(b) whether out of the 32 States mentioned, in 12 Stales' percentage of poverty is about 45 per cent; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have been taken to reduce the all India poverty percentage, especially in the 12 States referred to above.'

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a) to (c) As per the Planning Commission's estimate, the percentage of rural population living below poverty line was 37.27 in 1993-94. According to this estimate, in 10 States and one Union Territory (UT), about 45% of the rural population were living below the poverty line. The Ministery of Rural Development has been implementing a number of programmes aimed at